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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STOCKHOLM 001209

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 4 CLASSIFICATION CORRECTED)

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/NB, L/EUR, DS/IP/EUR

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TAGS: [KJUS](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [SW](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S SEPTEMBER 19 MEETING WITH JUSTICE  
MINISTER ASK: CT COOPERATION, IRAQI ASYLEES MOHAMMED  
CARTOONS

REF: A. STOCKHOLM 1178

[1](#)B. STOCKHOLM 1140

[1](#)C. STOCKHOLM 1090

[1](#)D. STOCKHOLM 1061

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Classified By: Ambassador Michael Wood, reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

#### Summary

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[1](#)1. (C) The Ambassador, accompanied by RSO and Poloff, met September 19 with Minister of Justice Beatrice Ask. Ask said Sweden has increased its budget for counterterrorism activities, noted there are good prospects for passing pending legislation on wiretapping and bugging, underscored Sweden's large influx of Iraqi asylum seekers, and said that the "Mohammed as a dog" issue was far from over. With regard to the MLAT, Minister Ask stressed that Sweden is interested in having it implemented and in force as soon as possible.  
End Summary

#### Increasing Counter-Terrorism Resources

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[1](#)2. (C) Ask said that Swedish progress on counterterrorism efforts were a major focus of her May 2007 trip to the U.S. She noted that during the 2006-7 budgetary cycle, the MOJ had increased CT assets, including personnel, by 30 percent, and had increased police assets across the board by 6 percent. In response to the Ambassador's query regarding the 2007-8 budget proposal, Ask said this would reflect a much more modest increase.

[1](#)3. (C) Ask emphasized that Sweden sought to ensure its CT efforts were effective, consistent with rule of law principles, and made with a view to long-term effects. The global war on terror, she said, would last longer than two years.

#### Wiretapping

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[1](#)4. (C) Ask said she was cautiously optimistic that wiretapping and "bugging" legislation, currently pending, would pass in the Parliament now that a "Security Integrity Board" and a parallel process for public disclosure had been established. She said that this arrangement, which would provide accountability and oversight to governmental fixed-line and remote monitoring device eavesdropping, was the best approach to deal with potential public concerns and parliamentary opposition. Ask noted, however, that it was certain that vocal public and legislative minorities would still make their opposition to governmental wiretapping known.

## Iraqi Immigration and Asylum

15. (C) Ask mentioned that her Ministry is confronting the effects of the disproportionate number of displaced Iraqi refugees in the country, saying that 60 percent of the Iraqi asylum applicants who come to EU countries end up in Sweden -- an estimated 20,000 in 2007, added to a total of approximately 100,000 now resident in Sweden. Ask said that this was Sweden's contribution to the situation in Iraq, and said that immigration issues would feature prominently on the EU agenda as Sweden assumes the EU presidency in the second half of 2009.

16. (C) Ask noted that that Iraqi immigration had been a primary focus of the September 1-2 visit of Foreign Minister Carl Bildt and Minister of Immigration Tobias Billstrom to Iraq. Ask thanked the U.S. for providing security and transport support for the visit.

## Mohammed Cartoons

17. (C) Ask called the issue of the "Mohammed as Dog" cartoons published in a Swedish regional paper a "slowly exploding bomb," noting that the government also had a role of protecting freedom of speech (refs a-d). Ask said that the artist Lars Vilks, who is now under government protection in response to the Al Qaeda in Iraq "fatwa", was not making things easy for Swedish police in charge of his security by making public appearances and describing his whereabouts to the media.

## MLAT

18. (C) Justice Minister Ask asked the Ambassador about the status of the U.S./Sweden Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT). We reviewed the Swedish MLAT relation to the EU MLAT, and the later's ratification prospects. Ask stressed that Sweden, which has already ratified, is keen on having

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the treaty implemented and in force as soon as possible.

## Trafficking in Persons

19. (C) Ask emphasized her interest in combating trafficking in persons. Ask said that she hoped that the Sweden EU Presidency would afford a chance to effect positive changes in the poor record of human trafficking produced by multilateral peacekeeping missions. The Ambassador noted that First Lady Laura Bush and Queen Sylvia had found common ground on this issue during the Swedish King and Queen's White House visit.

WOOD